

World class thinking. World class achieving.

St Mary's College

FRENCH A LEVEL Pre-course reading and guidance



Why choose A level in French?

A level French is a challenging but rewarding course to choose, and one that will provide intellectual stimulus alongside opportunities to develop, both personally and linguistically. Choosing A level allows you to move towards fluency in the language, at the same time as broadening your knowledge of Francophone countries and culture. You will study a range of topics such as art, heritage, cinema, politics, immigration, making the course engaging and diverse.

French is spoken widely across the world and it is the official language of 29 countries, so the opportunity for future travel and employment are also something to consider.

You will find the course enriching and gain real satisfaction from being able to truly express yourself in French with increasing fluency as you move through your studies.

EXAM SPECIFICATION LINKS

We use the exam board AQA and the full specification for A level, along with resources can be found using the link below:

[https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/
languages/as-and-a-
level/french-7652](https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/as-and-a-level/french-7652)

COURSE STRUCTURE

- This is a 2 year course which will be assessed via **3 exams** at the end of Year 13, details of which can be found later on in this presentation.
- In **Year 12** you will cover **6 topic areas** and the in-depth **study of a film.**
- In **Year 13** you will do a **further 6 topics**, as well as learning how to read and **analyse a novel in French.**
- The exams will assess your knowledge and skills in all 12 of the topic areas studied during Year 12 and 13, and you also write an essay on the film and book.
- For the speaking exam you are also required to complete an independent research topic with a Francophone theme and present it in the exam.
- At the end of the course you will be awarded an A level graded from A*-E.

PAPER 1

**Duration: 2 hours
30 minutes**

Marks: 100

**Percentage of
total A level: 50%**

Paper 1:

This is a combined listening, reading and translation exam in which you will be tested on all 12 of the A level topics from the 2 year course.

Questions 1-4: listening section

Questions 5-8: reading section

Question 9: translation from English to French

Question 10: translation from French to English.

PAPER 2

Duration: 2 hours

Marks: 80 (40 for each of the 2 essays)

Percentage of total A level: 20%

Paper 2:

In this exam you have to write 2 essays; one on the book you have studied and one on the film.

PAPER 3

Duration: 5
minutes
preparation time,
16-18 minutes
exam approx.

Marks: 60

Percentage of
total A level: 30%

Paper 3:

This is the speaking exam. There are 2 sections to complete.

Section 1: you are given 5 minutes to prepare a stimulus card on one of the Year 12 or 13 topics. You will then be required to discuss this topic for 5 minutes with the examiner.

Section 2: in this part of the exam, you have to present a project that you will have spent time researching and preparing beforehand. You choose the title of this research project, the only stipulation being that it must be linked to the culture or society of a Francophone country.

For more information about The Independent Research Project, follow the link:

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/languages/AQA-MFL-ALEVEL-TG-IRP.PDF>

Breakdown of Year 12 topics



USEFUL PRE-READING AND LINKS

Topic 1: La famille en voie de changement. (Family in French society)

- Vocabulary: <https://quizlet.com/gb/232605827/aqa-a-level-french-vocabulaire-la-famille-en-voie-de-changement-flash-cards/>
- Statistics on family: www.insee.fr

Topic 2: La <<cyber-société>>. (Technology in French society)

- Vocabulary: <https://tinycards.duolingo.com/decks/yLSMe27/french-a-level-la-cyber-societe?lesson=0>
- Statistics on internet use in France: <https://www.blogdumoderateur.com/internet-reseaux-sociaux-france-2020/>

Topic 3: La role du bénévolat. (Role of volunteering in French society)

- Vocabulary: <https://tinycards.duolingo.com/decks/vR2LfFE/french-a-level-le-benevolat?lesson=0>
- Examples of French charities: <https://emmaus-france.org/>
<https://www.msf.fr/>

Breakdown of Year 12 topics



USEFUL PRE-READING AND LINKS

Topic 4: Les ados, le droit de vote et l'engagement politique. (Young people and politics)

- Vocabulary: <https://www.memrise.com/course/65292/a-level-french-part-ii/1/>
- Statistics on young people's political engagement: <https://etudiant.lefigaro.fr/les-news/actu/detail/article/les-jeunes-boudent-l-engagement-politique-traditionnel-18245/>

Topic 5: Manifestations, grèves – à qui le pouvoir? (The importance of strikes to the French)

- Vocabulary: <https://www.frenchtoday.com/blog/french-vocabulary/french-strike-vocabulary/>
- Statistics on strikes and protests in France: <https://fr.euronews.com/2019/12/06/statistiques-le-5-decembre-une-des-plus-grandes-journees-de-mobilisation-en-france>

Topic 6: La politique et l'immigration. (Immigration, integration and racism)

- Vocabulary: <https://tinycards.duolingo.com/decks/55UX866/a2-french-vocab-immigration>
- Statistics on immigration in France: <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/3633212>

GRAMMAR CHECKLIST

The more aspects of this grammar list you can feel secure in applying the rules before A level, the better!

A really good website for learning about French grammar is:

www.French.about.com

- Gender of nouns
- Definite and indefinite articles
- Adjectival agreements and position
- Pronouns: subject, object, disjunctive, demonstrative, possessive and relative pronouns
- Present tense
- Perfect tense
- Imperfect tense
- Future and conditional tense
- Pluperfect/future perfect and conditional perfect tenses
- The subjunctive mood
- The passive voice
- The gerund (sometimes called present participles)
- Negatives
- Prepositions

THE FILM

‘La Haine’

Director:

Mathieu Kassovitz

Set in ‘la banlieue’, Paris’ deprived suburbs, the film follows 24 hours in the life of 3 young second generation immigrants Vinz, Hubert and Saïd. The countdown clock used periodically throughout the film gives the spectator a sense of foreboding, that we are counting down to some event as it draws you to its dramatic ending. The film covers themes such as life for immigrants in France, drug addiction, gang violence and police brutality, and gives an insight into what life is like for those living on the margins of French society. Hard hitting, thrilling and realistic it is no surprise that this film won best director in Cannes and numerous international awards.

› <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWrXQ8LsKYg>

THE BOOK

‘Kiffe kiffe
demain’

par Faïza Guène

Also set on ‘la banlieue’, the book takes a less dramatic look at some of the same themes as the film of life for immigrants in Paris, but also deals with the day to day difficulties such as how to make ends meet, the banality of life on a low income job and the failures of the French school system. The book uses authentic youth language, so will introduce you to French slang, verlan (French street language) as well as words influenced by other languages such as Arabic and therefore provides an interesting study into how the French language is evolving to represent the country’s changing demographic.

- › <http://www.supersummary.com/kiffe-kiffe-tomorrow/summary/>

HOW A LEVEL (LANGUAGE) DEVELOPS YOUR CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

Whilst the main skill that you acquire is obviously to gain fluency in French, you will study many topics within your A level course which will broaden your cultural awareness and intellect, keeping the course interesting and varied. Below are some examples of the wider knowledge you will gain and how you can find out more:

- **Art:** <https://learnodo-newtonic.com/famous-french-artists>
- **Gastronomy:** <https://www.sunlocation.com/guide/la-gastronomie-francaise-patrimoine-et-savoir-faire>
- **Architecture:** <http://www.cosmovisions.com/archiFranceChrono.htm>
- **Music:** www.fluentu.com
- **Films:** www.fluentu.com
- **Politics:** www.lepoint.com
- **Geography:** <http://www.europa-planet.com/france/geographie.htm>

WIDER SKILLS

Through A level French you will also learn how to...

- analyse literature
- study a film
- debate controversial issues
- discuss current affairs and politics
- discuss philosophy and ethics
- research and present a project
- present a coherent and clear argument
- write essays
- improve your English

EXTRA CURRICULAR:

BOOKS, POETRY, FILMS TO WATCH

FRENCH NOVELS:

- › L'étranger (Albert Camus)
- › Les Mains Sales (Jean Paul Sartre)
- › Le Blé en Herbe (Colette)
- › La Symphonie Pastorale (André Gide)
- › En attendant Godot (Samuel Beckett)
- › La Gloire de Mon Pere & Le Chateau de Ma Mere (Marcel Pagnol)
- › Prévert poetry

FRENCH NEWSPAPERS:

- › Le Monde
- › Le Figaro

FILMS:

- › Un long été de fiancailles
- › L'Intouchable
- › La Famille Bélier
- › Les Quatre Cent Coups
- › A Bout de Souffle
- › Jules et Jim
- › Amélie
- › Etre et Avoir
- › L'Ordre et la Morale

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